(b) The allocation for S&T sector during Ninth Plan period was Rs. 25,529 crores. This was Rs. 17,529 crores and Rs. 8,264 crores during Eighth and Seventh Five Year Plans respectively.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) As a result of support to scientific research by the Government, a number of scientists have been elected as Fellows of Royal Society in various areas including Mathematics, Chemistry and Biology.

(e) The Government have been taking various measures to improve scientific research in the country by supporting research and development programmes/projects, strengthening S&T infrastructure, manpower development programmes and by providing various fiscal incentives for promoting R&D in industry.

NCERT text books

*455. SHRI VIJAY J. DARDA: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that some States have decided not to teach NCERT's new text books and not to follow the syllabus based thereon;

(b) if so, how the students in places like Delhi, which do not have exclusive School Examination Boards except the CBSE, will answer question papers set by the CBSE, which would be based on NCERT's syllabus; and

(c) what steps Government propose to take so that such students do not suffer in such circumstances?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI): (a) to (c) The Hon'ble Supreme Court had earlier stayed the operation of National Curriculum Framework for School Education (NCFSE) 2000 and text books relating to Social Sciences, including History and religion and Hindi. After the vacation of stay by the Hon'ble Supreme Court, the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) has advised all Heads of Institutions affiliated to it to follow the new curriculum with immediate effect. It is for the respective State Governments/Boards of School Education to take suitable decision in

respect of syllabus/text books to be used in their schools. No authentic information from any State Government/UT including Delhi, indicating their decision not to teach NCERT's syllabus and new text books has been received.

Telecom network for rail users

*456. SHRIMATI N.P. DURGA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Railways propose to create a national telecom and multimedia network to provide a platform for communications revolution especially in rural areas;

(b) whether the Railways also plan to provide Kiosks and STD/ISD booths on railway platforms;

(c) whether there is any proposal to provide mobile telephone facilities in trains also; and

(d) if so, the details in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI NITISH KUMAR): (a) Yes, Sir. Ministry of Railways has set up RailTel Corporation of India Ltd. (RailTel), a Public Sector Undertaking under the administrative control of Ministry of Railways to create a nationwide telecom and multi-media network by utilising Railways' optical fibre assets and right-of-way. RailTel will initially connect 4 major Metros namely Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai & Kolkata and 4 mini Metros namely Ahmedabad, Pune, Bangalore and Hyderabad and also provide bandwidth at stations enroute which can be used for providing communication in rural areas.

(b) Ministry of Railways have issued detailed guidelines to the Zonal Railways for provision of STD/ISD/PCO/FAX/Internet booths at Railway Stations. RailTel is also examining the feasibility of providing Internet/ STD/ISD Kiosks on the Railway Stations.

(c) and (d) At present, Mobile Telephone facilities are being provided based on the need as well as availability of service in the area where the train is running. RailTel, alongwith the Cellular Service Providers, is examining the feasibility to utilise its optical fibre infrastructure to extend cellular services along the railway track, which will enable railway passengers to use the mobile services in the running train.